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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: emergency international assistance for peace, normalcy and reconstruction of war-stricken Afghanistan

The situation in Afghanistan and its implications for international peace and security

Letter dated 28 July 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to draw your attention to the statement by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the relocation of non-governmental organization offices in Kabul, Afghanistan, issued on 28 July 1998 (copies annexed hereto in English and French).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly at its fifty-second session under agenda items 20 (c) and 43.

(*Signed*) Ernst **Sucharipa**
Permanent Representative of Austria
to the United Nations

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Annex

[Original: English and French]

Statement by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the relocation of non-government organization offices in Kabul, Afghanistan

The European Union is deeply concerned by the decision of the Taliban authorities in Kabul to forcefully close the offices of international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), expel NGO foreign workers and imprison NGO local personnel. These decisions have forced the NGOs to abandon their much needed help for the innocent civilian population of Kabul, which now has to suffer the consequences of the decisions of the local authorities.

The European Union further condemns the violation of premises of the European Community Humanitarian Office in Kabul and the treatment of local staff of the European Community Humanitarian Office by the authorities of the Taliban.

The European Union donates two thirds of all humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, but the European Commission has now been obliged to suspend common funding by the Community for projects in Kabul. The European Union earnestly desires to continue helping the Afghan people, who have already suffered so much from years of conflict. However, aid can only continue where it can be delivered in an effective and principled manner, without discrimination, and where humanitarian organizations are able to carry out their work freely and safely.

The European Union once again calls upon all warring factions to end the bloodshed in Afghanistan and to undertake serious steps towards a negotiated settlement. In this context, the European Union welcomes the continuing efforts by prominent Afghans representing a broad spectrum of Afghan society, such as those who met at Bonn from 18 to 23 July in the framework of the so-called Frankfurt process, to prepare for a *Loya Jirga* (grand assembly), a time-honoured Afghan instrument for settling disputes.

The European Union welcomes the position taken by the United Nations and fully supports its efforts to resolve the crisis in Kabul and to ensure adequate conditions for the delivery of aid. It hopes that NGOs will soon be able to return so that humanitarian needs can be met.

The Central and Eastern European countries and Cyprus associated with the European Union and the countries of the European Free Trade Association members of the European Economic Area align themselves with this declaration.